



**Construction site
thefts higher on
weekends**

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Produced by the San Diego County Regional Auto Theft Task Force—www.sdratt.com

PREMIER CRIME FIGHTING UNITS JOIN FORCES

In a collaborative effort designed to target and arrest wanted car and motorcycle theft suspects, San Diego County's Regional Auto Theft Task Force, RATT has partnered with the highly successful Crime Stoppers Program.

Crime statistics for San Diego County show that vehicle thefts have been cut dramatically since 1992, from a high of 35,000 to just over 13,700 reported thefts in 2010. RATT hopes to reduce those numbers even further by tapping into the proven ability of Crime Stoppers to garner public attention on unsolved crime cases.

"We think it's a natural fit for a proactive auto theft unit like RATT to team with a highly successful organization such as Crime Stoppers" said California Highway Patrol Captain Scott Parker, RATT's commanding officer. "Crime Stoppers has the ability to draw public attention to unsolved crimes that has lead to the arrest of hundreds of vehicle theft suspects" Parker added.

Since 1984, anonymous tips made to San Diego County Crime Stoppers have resulted in the arrest of 559 vehicle theft suspects, according to Sally Cox, the Executive Director of Crime Stoppers San Diego. "We've got a good track record

when it comes to getting the word out on wanted individuals. RATT will be able to utilize our phone, text and email lines in order to receive tips from the public on wanted car thieves, stolen vehicle "chop shops" and auto insurance fraud scammers." Cox added.

Individuals with information on wanted suspects can reach RATT via Crime Stopper's 24 hours a day and remain completely anonymous.

If the information provided to Crime Stoppers regarding a suspect wanted for vehicle theft, automobile insurance fraud or other crimes results in their arrest, the tipster may be eligible for a reward up to \$1,000. Over the last five years, Crime Stoppers has paid out more than \$150,000 in rewards.



For more information : sally@crimestoppers.com

Your tip could equal...



**Five Ways to make an
Anonymous Crime Tip:**

**CALL: (888) 580-8477
TEXT: SDTIPS to 274637
WEB: SDRATT.com
i-PHONE AP
FACEBOOK**

a reward up to \$1,000



Has This Happened To You, Yet?

As you walk up to your car, you look over and notice your front (or back) license plate is missing. Your first thought might be, it must have fallen off somewhere. Or, are you one of those individuals who doesn't like the way the license plate looks on the front end of your really cool car so you decided not to put that plate on? Besides, it has been such a long time since you last saw that plate, you don't even remember where you put it.

In either case, that missing license plate could eventually cause you problems with law enforcement. Firstly, California law requires you have both a front and a rear license plate on your vehicle. Eventually, a police officer will stop you, probably at an inconvenient time, and issue a citation.

Immediately report lost or stolen license plates to the DMV and to your local police/sheriff's departments



Secondly, the missing license plate that you first thought probably fell off somewhere along the roadside or was last seen on a back shelf in your garage, could possibly be on a stolen vehicle. In fact, according to U.S. Customs Service records, a vehicle Customs believes belongs to you, based on that license plate, has crossed into Mexico over a dozen times in the last month alone. And to make matters even worse, according to an anonymous tip, that car is being used to transport illegal drugs and other contraband back and forth across the international border.

If you discover that either one or both of your license plates are missing whether it's the result of being misplaced, lost or stolen, you need to report it immediately.

Your first call should be to your local law enforcement agency. The lost and or stolen license plate needs to be reported to the police so it can be entered into their crime data base. If while on patrol a police officer spots your plate on a suspicious car, a computer check will reveal the status of your recently reported stolen license plate.

After reporting your missing license plate to law enforcement your next step would be a visit the nearest Department of Motor Vehicles office. You will need to turn over to the DMV your one remaining license plate at which time you will be issued a new set of plates. Remember, simply turning over your old plates to the DMV without making a separate police report will not get your lost or stolen license plates entered into the law enforcement data base.

You will be charged an \$18 fee to cover the replacement cost of the plate.

If a thief steals only the month or year sticker that is normally affixed to your rear license plates, then only a DMV report should be made. There is also an \$18 replacement fee for new stickers.



Prevention tips:

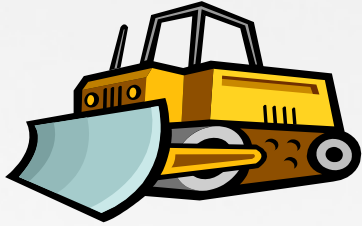
As soon as you receive your new license plates or month/year stickers consider the following:

- Affix the month and year stickers to your plate following the DMV instructions. Then, use a razor blade to score several diagonal lines across the stickers in opposite directions. This will make it harder for a thief to remove
- Use tamperproof screws to secure the license plates to the vehicle
- Consider installing a lockable license plate frame. Some license plate lockable frames are designed to not only secure the license plate to your vehicle but also protect the month/year stickers from theft. Prices range from \$20 to \$100



California Vehicle Code Section 5201 (F)(2) does not allow any portion of the license plate's numbers to be covered. However, the use of a small, clear piece of Plexiglas / Lexan to cover the month and year stickers is permitted.

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Construction Site Security

Contractors know that construction site theft is a huge problem and a big business for criminals. Industry experts estimate annual losses at roughly \$1 billion in the United States. The number of thefts and dollar amounts are increasing. Criminals think that the chances of getting caught are slim so they have become bolder over the past few years. While criminals will steal just about anything on the job site, these are the more common target items:

Copper wire and scrap metal
Doors and windows

Tools
Plumbing supplies and fixtures

Generators
Loaders

Bobcats
Backhoes

Remember, many of these items may fall under insurance deductibles and therefore the contractor bears the brunt of the loss. High dollar thefts could cause difficulties in finding insurance coverage. Most thieves have an intimate knowledge of the construction industry. They know what to steal, when to steal it, where to steal it and where to sell it. An estimated 90% of equipment thefts take place between 6pm Friday and 6am Monday.

What Can Be Done?

- Establish a written job site security plan and assign supervisory security responsibilities. Encourage security awareness among all workers and require prompt reporting of incidents of theft and vandalism.
- Maintain an inventory control system for all equipment and tools. Keep careful ownership records. Find numbers on each machine; write them down and identify where the numbers are located; take pictures of large ticket items. Keep this information readily accessible.
- Mark your equipment with an identification system, such as a driver's license number (State initials, number, followed by DL). It is the only traceable number in all 50 states. Weld company name on equipment. Put numbers in two spots: obvious and hidden.
- Disable heavy equipment before leaving job site. Universal keys can be easily obtained. Taking out a battery or removing a steering wheel may discourage a thief. Disable equipment with hidden switches.
- Install anti-theft devices on equipment: fuel cutoffs, hydraulic bypasses, track locks or alarms.
- Install GPS on larger pieces of equipment.
- Lock oil and gas tanks caps where possible as a means of deterring vandalism.
- Try not to leave equipment in remote areas. Park equipment in well-lighted secure areas.
- Keep equipment and supplies locked in securable storage sheds.
- Keep expensive items off of a job site for as long as possible.
- Install fences that limit all accessible entry points. The National Equipment Registry recommends adding a fence around the site and augmenting it with motion sensor lighting and an alarm system.
- Provide for nighttime lighting of the site.
- Provide parking areas outside of site for employees and visitors.
- Post trespass warning sign.
- Use surveillance cameras. The idea of being caught on video may deter some criminals.
- Change padlocks on gates and around site several times during construction.
- Hire a reputable security firm to patrol the site especially on weekends, holidays.
- Promptly report all losses to the police.
- **Be willing to prosecute!**

**UP to \$1000
REWARD**
for information resulting in
ARREST, RESTITUTION or RECOVERY
from theft or vandalism of
tools, equipment, materials or property

**HELP US
STOP CRIME**

Call Toll Free 1-800-
432-7257 EXT. 823
**REMAIN
ANONYMOUS**

CONSUMER SERVICE
CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ENDORSED BY CMAP / PCA

www.crimepreventionprogram.org

Automobile Buying Fraud Awareness Tips

If you are planning on buying a car, boat or motorcycle, then searching the classifieds, auto magazines or the Internet is a great way to increase your chances for finding that perfect vehicle. The following awareness tips were put together by the publishers of the Auto Trader magazine in order to help their consumers avoid becoming a victim of an automobile related fraud.

Common-Sense Advice for Car Buyers:

- **Know the car's market value-** Be suspicious of a vehicle priced significantly below market value. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- **Obtain a vehicle history report-** A vehicle history report can provide useful information, such as who holds the title to the car and whether the car has been in an accident reported to authorities. You'll also find out whether the car was ever reported stolen, salvaged or damaged.
- **Inspect the car-** Schedule an inspection with a professional mechanic or an inspection service if the car is not in your area. An early inspection can help you identify problems. However, keep in mind that an inspection isn't a warranty and won't guarantee a car is free from defects or that inspectors have identified all existing problems.
- **Confirm contact information-** Before you send payment, verify the seller's street address and phone number, an email address is not enough. ZIP codes, area codes and addresses should match up. Be wary if the seller is located overseas.
- **Use email wisely-** Avoid sending sensitive personal or financial information (such as your social security number, credit card number or checking account number) to a seller via email. Remember that email communications are not secure and can be easily forwarded to others.
- **Get a detailed receipt-** Ask the seller for a receipt that states whether the vehicle is being sold with a warranty or "as is."
- **Get title to the vehicle-** Make sure you know what's required in your state to transfer title to the vehicle you're buying.



Common-Sense Advice for Car Sellers:

- **Confirm contact information-** Be particularly wary of buyers willing to purchase your car sight-unseen, especially buyers located overseas. Always verify the buyer's street address and phone number.
- **Secure payment first-** Do not transfer the title until you have payment in hand at the agreed upon price.
- **Verify that a certified check is genuine-** Before you deposit a certified check, verify authenticity with the issuing bank, not just your bank. Make sure the account contains sufficient funds and the issuing bank guarantees payment on the check. It may take a week or more for the check to clear. It hasn't cleared just because your bank has accepted it and credited your account.
- **Beware of overpayment or other complicated payment schemes-** Don't agree to any plan where the buyer asks to send a check for more than the sale price and requests that the seller refund the difference. And be suspicious of any buyer who proposes making payment through a friend or agent of the buyer.

source: Autotrader.com



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